

DUCKS UNLIMITED TESTIMONY
SB 0234 – Mr. Marshal Anderson
March 12, 2013

Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Marshall Anderson, and I am a DU volunteer, major donor, and independent businessman. I am here to ask for your support of SB 0234 not only because of the great environmental benefits it will bring to our state, but because of the great economic benefits it can mean to Michigan.

First, Ducks Unlimited is the largest private, non-profit wetlands conservation organization in the world, having been involved in the conservation of more than 13 million acres of habitat across North America. Our Regional Office in Ann Arbor employs 35 people that work in a 21 state area conserving wetlands through voluntary, incentive-based programs. Right here in Michigan, Ducks Unlimited has conserved more than 72,000 acres of habitat, consisting of more than 1,500 projects, with an investment of over \$27 million dollars since 1985.

Second, DU as a non-profit has an excellent track record. It has an 83 percent efficiency rating, which means 83 cents out of every dollar goes towards its mission of habitat conservation. For the record, DU has committed that 100 percent of the license plate proceeds will go towards wetland conservation in Michigan. As you heard from Tracy, DU leverages, or matches, every dollar it raises by at least 4 times, working with partners such as major donors like Tracy and I, foundations like DTE, the Michigan DNR, and others. This leveraging capacity makes great business sense!

Third, funding from the DU license plate will be used right here in Michigan to protect and restore wetlands, and in doing so, employ not only DU biologists and engineers in the state, but also local contractors and other businesses that help us do our work – so it will help to stimulate the economy while we do restoration work. It is a win-win for everyone in the state.

And finally, hunting and fishing is big business in our state. More than 1.9 million people participate, and spend approximately \$4.83 BILLION annually. That is more than the combined receipts of corn, soybeans and dairy products, three of our biggest agricultural commodities. Wetlands provide a nesting and rearing habitat, as well as provide places for people to hunt, fish, trap, wildlife watch, and just recreate.

In summary, a DU specialty plate presents residents of Michigan the unique opportunity to support wetlands conservation while annually registering their vehicle. This bill will provide a *voluntary* mechanism for Michigan residents to show their *support* for the habitat conservation efforts of Ducks Unlimited, one of the most efficient and effective conservation organizations. Senate Bill 0234 and its companion in the House HB 4337, simply makes great environmental and economic sense in my opinion and the time to pass these bills is now.

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to speak before you today, and thank you for your support of Ducks Unlimited.

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SB 0234 – Mr. Tracy Oberleiter

March 12, 2013

Greetings Mister Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Tracy Oberleiter, a volunteer and major donor with Ducks Unlimited. I am also a Senior Vice President of Monroe Bank and Trust. I appear before you today in support of a Ducks Unlimited specialty license plate in a few capacities.

First, as I mentioned, I am representing Ducks Unlimited as a volunteer representative of the Michigan chapter, which has about 28,000 members within 130 chapters throughout the state. DU's mission is to conserve wetlands for waterfowl, other wildlife and people.

Passage of a DU specialty license plate will play a significant role in the future of wetlands and related habitats in Michigan, and for those that enjoy recreating in these habitats; a future that is important not only for all current residents, but also for those who come after us, such as my three daughters and three grandchildren.

Wetlands are much more than places for ducks and geese. They serve as filters that clean our drinking water, sponges for holding flood waters and reducing flood damage, they recharge our groundwater, serve as habitat important for other wildlife such as fish and endangered plants and animals, and enrich our quality of life.

Nationwide many other states have a DU license plate, *including all of our surrounding Great Lakes neighbors in Wisconsin, Illinois, Ohio, Indiana, Pennsylvania and even Ontario!* It is time for Michigan to join the ranks on behalf of wetlands and waterfowl, and the hunters, fishers, and wildlife watchers in our state.

A DU license plate holds the promise of providing additional funds to help restore and protect precious wetland habitat across the state because DU will keep all of the revenue from the sale of the license plate for use on wetland conservation here in Michigan. DU has a track record of matching each dollar we get at least 4 to 1, with additional funding from DU major donors, as well as federal, state and private grants, and funds from corporations and foundations to drastically increase the pot of funding available for Michigan habitat conservation.

In fact, we anticipate selling a minimum of 5,000 license plates, which will generate \$125,000. Given the fact that Ducks Unlimited typically leverages each dollar 4 times, the net affect will be an expected half million dollars or more for wetland conservation. In essence, this bill will generate far reaching conservation benefits for all of Michigan's residents, both humans and wildlife.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today, and on behalf of all of DU's 28,000 members we encourage your support on SB 0234. Thank you.